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Reports

Item#1

Silk Road Diplomacy - Twists, Turns and Distorted History. YaleGlobal. Tansen Sen. September 23, 2014.

In foreign policy initiatives, China's leaders promote an idyllic version of the Silk Road network of land and maritime routes stretching from Europe to Asia's eastern coast, linking diverse cultures in trade. The goal is to link China's historic and modern roles in promoting peace and prosperity for Asia. But the history of ancient expeditions is complicated, with goals and practices unacceptable in the modern context. "Not mentioned ... are the backdrops of conflict and the push to spread a Sinocentric world order," explains Sen. Sen quickly reviews the history of travels by China's 1st century BCE Western Han envoy Zhang Qian and 15th century Admiral Zheng He. "The Silk Roads initiative of the Chinese government, with substantial influx of money and investment, could boost the economies of several countries in Asia and Europe that are willing to claim ancient links to the Middle Kingdom," concludes Sen, who adds that such historical revisionism has geopolitical implications.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/silk-road-diplomacy-%E2%80%93-twists-turns-and-distorted-history>

[HTML format, various paging].

Item#2

US and Vietnam to Discuss Curbing China's Sea Claims. YaleGlobal. David Brown. September 25, 2014.

Vietnamese Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will meet in Washington early October. The two nations, at war more than 40 years ago, now find common interest in protecting open sea lanes in the South China Sea. China asserts sweeping claims, going as far as to construct new islets and impose limitations on the use of other nations' exclusive economic zones. China signed the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the United States has not. "Kerry and Minh should work out a middle course that protects US policy autonomy while maintaining balance in the region," writes former Brown. Diplomacy and increased US engagement could include training regional coast guards with the aim of minimizing risky maneuvers that could trigger greater conflict, lifting a ban on weapons sales to Vietnam, encouraging joint explorations for oil and gas and encouraging multilateral fisheries management. In the meantime, Brown urges Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines to waste no time in sorting out their own competing claims.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/us-and-vietnam-need-cooperate-curb-china%E2%80%99s-sea-claims>

[HTML format, various paging].

Item#3

In Hong Kong and Elsewhere, Democracy's Messy Process Challenged in the Street. YaleGlobal. Humphrey Hawksley. October 7, 2014.

By definition, democracy entails both representative government and majority rule. Factions, minority or majority, who take a disliking to some government policies no longer bide their time, cooperating in the process while waiting for the next election. "The new reality is that tenure in office is set not

through an agreed electoral cycle, but by ability to keep protesters off the streets," suggests the author. Reasons for protests vary: In societies like Iraq with a long history of mistrust, elections fail to build fair institutions. In nations like Egypt and Thailand, educated and wealthy protesters are alarmed by decisions made by a larger block of rural poor. In Hong Kong, vast numbers simply do not trust the system or leaders' interpretations of laws. Rapid messaging of social media and outsiders who diminish rule of law by supporting protests for strategic reasons encourage dangerous trends. Democracy requires adherence to the rule of law and patience.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/hong-kong-and-elsewhere-democracy%E2%80%99s-messy-process-challenged-street> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#4

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: Background and Current Developments. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Jonathan E. Medalia. September 29, 2014.

A ban on all nuclear tests is the oldest item on the nuclear arms control agenda. Nuclear testing has a long history, beginning in 1945. The Natural Resources Defense Council states that the United States conducted 1,030 nuclear tests, the Soviet Union 715, the United Kingdom 45, France 210, and China 45. (Of the U.K. tests, 24 were held jointly with the United States and are not included in the foregoing U.S. total.) The last U.S. test was held in 1992; Russia claims it has not tested since 1990. In 1998, India and Pakistan announced several nuclear tests. Each declared a test moratorium; neither has signed the CTBT. North Korea announced that it conducted nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, and 2013. Since 1997, the United States has held 27 "subcritical experiments" at the Nevada National Security Site, most recently in December 2012, to study how plutonium behaves under pressures generated by explosives. It asserts these experiments do not violate the CTBT because they cannot produce a self-sustaining chain reaction. Russia reportedly held some such experiments since 1998.

<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL33548.pdf>? [PDF format, 73 pages, 700.73 KB].

Item#5

War in Ukraine Exposes Russia's Weakness. YaleGlobal. Chris Miller. September 16, 2014.

The Eurasian Union, as conceived by Russia, was supposed to rival the European Union as a trade and economic force. "Most notable about the Eurasian Union is not the geopolitical vision that motivates it, but how badly the entire project has gone," argues Chris Miller. Russian aggression is unnerving former members of the Soviet bloc. Neighboring Ukraine long had close ties with Russia, but with the takeover in Crimea and war along the eastern border, disagreements run deep and regional distrust spreads. Former Soviet states gradually expand their ties with economies that offer more than energy: "The appeal of European Union on the west and that of a resurgent China in the east continues to nibble away at Russian power and influence," Miller explains. Aggression may deter nations like Georgia or Ukraine from joining NATO, but weakens Russian influence in other areas. Russia's ready reliance on military force encourages other neighboring nations to diversify political, economic and cultural relations and better withstand bullying.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/war-ukraine-exposes-russia%E2%80%99s-weakness> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#6

Modi: Forging New Relationships with Washington. YaleGlobal. Sumit Ganguly. September 30, 2014.

Based on his own track record and promises to deliver economic growth to all of India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was swept into office with a decisive parliamentary majority. Domestic prosperity is linked with global ambitions, and one is not secure without the other, suggests Sumit Ganguly. He reviews Modi's foreign-policy challenges and recent visits with leaders in Japan, China and the United States. The United States, especially the Indian diaspora, has enthusiastically welcomed Modi and his economic program, but many policy differences remain. Modi and President Barack Obama issued a joint statement that promises cooperation, but Ganguly notes that requires a strong partnership, including "avoidance of mutual recriminations, close and routinized consultations, and a working policy agenda that addresses concerns of both sides." Discussion of shared regional security concerns and plans for tackling compelling global issues is a useful start.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/modi-forging-new-relationships-washington> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#7

Man without a Country? Expatriation of U.S. Citizen "Foreign Fighters" Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. September 15, 2014.

Some Members of Congress have advocated and sponsored bills for expatriation, one way of losing citizenship, as a method of dealing with U.S. citizens fighting abroad for foreign terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This phenomenon has piqued concern in Congress about the possibility that such citizens may return to the United States to perpetrate terrorist acts on U.S. soil or may flout U.S. foreign policy by continuing to fight abroad for such groups.

<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/expat.pdf> [PDF format, 2 pages, 57.53 KB].

Item#8

From ISIS to Unemployment: What Do Americans Know? Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. October 2, 2014.

The latest Pew Research Center News IQ quiz measures the public's awareness of key facts in the news: from questions about conflicts around the world to the current minimum wage and the chair of the Federal Reserve. The survey finds that a large majority (73%) is able to correctly identify the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. In addition, amid ongoing U.S.-led airstrikes against Islamic militants in the Middle East, 67% can identify Syria as one of the countries in which the militant group known as ISIS currently controls territory. And 60% know that Ukraine was once part of the Soviet Union; the other choices were Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Scandinavia.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2014/10/Final-Knowledge-Release2.pdf> [PDF format, 18 pages, 545.06 KB].

Item#9

United States-Gulf Cooperation Council Security Cooperation in a Multipolar World. Strategic Studies Institute. Mohammed El-Katiri. October 1, 2014.

Military and security cooperation with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states is of continuing importance for the United States given the region's pivotal location in the Middle East and proximity to Iran. The monograph examines recent developments in the political and economic dynamics in GCC countries and their neighbors, and the potential implications for this cooperation.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1225> [HTML format with a link to the PDF file, 68 pages, 1.38 MB].

Item#10

Venezuela: Dangerous Inertia. International Crisis Group. September 23, 2014.

The streets of Venezuela's major cities are now largely calm, following several months of violent clashes between opposition demonstrators, security forces and civilian gunmen that left more than 40 dead. The crisis, however, is not over, according to the report. The opposition is demanding freedom for several dozen activists jailed during the unrest and an end to the threat of prosecution against more than 2,000. The underlying causes have not been addressed, and calls to restore autonomy and independence to the justice system and other key institutions have not been heeded. Living standards continue to decline due to economic recession; violent crime remains at record levels, and labour unrest and protests over poor-quality public services are often dealt with harshly. Greater international efforts are required to bring the sides back to the negotiating table, since the alternative to dialogue is likely to be further violence sooner or later.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/latin-america-caribbean/andes/venezuela/b031-venezuela-dangerous-inertia.aspx> Summary in English [HTML format, various paging].

http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/latin-america-caribbean/andes/venezuela/b031-venezuela-dangerous-inertia.aspx?alt_lang=es Summary in Spanish [HTML format, various paging].

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/latin-america/venezuela/b031-venezuela-dangerous-inertia> Full Text in English [PDF format, 16 pages, 1006.55 KB].

Item#11

How to Fund the Ebola Fight. YaleGlobal. Paula Kavathas. September 18, 2014.

Ebola is spreading quickly in West Africa and, with global air travel, could quickly hop new borders. The health infrastructure of West Africa is weak, with limited resources and trained personnel. Prevention is the goal for a virus with no approved vaccine or therapeutic. Funding is scarce, even for premier researchers with the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Nations with advanced health systems could take the lead by imposing a small tax on international air tickets, argues

Paula Kavathas. A \$3 tax could raise \$500 million per year, funding research and development for vaccines, therapeutics or diagnostics for Ebola and other emerging infectious diseases. Infectious diseases leave behind a trail of death and economic harm, and a massive, well-funded response is in the interest of all. As Kavathas concludes, Ebola won't be the last epidemic.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/how-fund-ebola-fight> [HTML format, varios paging].

Item#12

Most Are Confident in Government's Ability to Prevent Major Ebola Outbreak in U.S. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. October 6, 2014.

As the Ebola outbreak in Africa continues, and two patients receive treatment in the U.S., most Americans have at least a fair amount of confidence in the government's ability to prevent a major outbreak of Ebola in the U.S. In addition, relatively few are concerned that they or a family member will be exposed to the virus.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2014/10/10-6-14-Ebola-Release.pdf> [PDF format, 8 pages, 402.86 KB].

Item#13

The Other Quiet Professionals: Lessons for Future Cyber Forces from the Evolution of Special Forces. RAND Corporation. Christopher Paul et al. October 3, 2014.

A review of commonalities, similarities, and differences between the still-nascent U.S. cyber force and early U.S. special operations forces, conducted in 2010, offers salient lessons for the future direction of U.S. cyber forces.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR700/RR780/RAND_RR780.pdf [PDF format, 84 pages, 713.90 KB].

Item#14

Understanding Key Positions of the Least Developed Countries in Climate Change Negotiations. International Institute for Environment and Development. Prakash Mathema et al. September 2014.

By December 2015, a new climate change agreement must be in place under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). International progress is slow, but the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are being proactive. Two milestones in the timetable for an agreement are fast approaching. First, countries attending the next annual Conference of the Parties are to agree elements of a draft negotiating text. Secondly, by early 2015 parties will start communicating how they will contribute to the new agreement. The briefing sets out three of the LDC's key positions: on a 1.5 degree pathway, on a binding regime and on achieving a comprehensive agreement.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17252IIED.pdf> [PDF format, 4 pages, 118.34 KB].

Item#15

Cost Considerations in Cloud Computing. RAND Corporation. Kathryn Connor et al. October 2, 2014.

By examining cost drivers for several data management approaches, the report identifies considerations that can help guide analysts until the Department of Defense develops official guidance for cost analysis of cloud and data centers.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE113/RAND_PE113.pdf [PDF format, 16 pages, 295.40 KB].